District Review Report

School District No. 52 (Prince Rupert)

April 4 - 7, 2004

Submitted to the Minister of Education

By District Review Team Chair
Terrence S.Sullivan Ph.D., Superintendent,
School District No. 73 (Kamloops/Thompson)

District Review Report

2003/2004

District Name:	Prince Rupert
District Number:	52
Superintendent:	Peter Porte
Date of Visit:	April 4 - 7
Team Chair:	Terry Sullivan, Superintendent, SD 73 (Kamloops/Thompson)
Team Members:	Angelle Desrochers, Parent, SD 39 (Vancouver) Jill Levere, Coordinator Early Literacy/ Numeracy (Ministry of Education) Jim Cambridge, Director of Instruction, SD 62 (Sooke) Libby Hart, District Principal, SD 91 (Nechako Lakes) Lorna Williams, Director of Aboriginal Education (Ministry of Education) Michael Munro, Assistant Superintendent, SD 68 (Naniamo-Ladysmith) Noreen Pankewich, Aboriginal Ed.Teacher, SD 73 (Kamloops/Thompson) Ray Comeau, Principal, SD 43 (Coquitlam)

Context

The purpose of the District Review is to provide feedback and recommendations to the District, the Ministry of Education and the public regarding the District's work in improving student achievement by:

- Reviewing district and school achievement data
- Reviewing the District's Accountability Contract known in School District No. 52 as the Partnership Agreement (Accountability Contract) and the School Plans to improve student achievement.
- Making recommendations to the Board and to the Minister about improving student achievement; and
- Identifying promising practices that will assist other districts and schools in their efforts to improve student achievement.

School District No. 52, Prince Rupert, is one of twenty districts participating in the District Review process during the 2003-2004 school year.

School District No. 52 serves the Prince Rupert area, on the North Coast of British Columbia, Canada. The Prince Rupert School District is situated on traditional Tsimshian territory and provides educational services to a diverse multi-cultural student population over half of which is of First Nations Ancestry. The District is made up of 12 schools in Prince Rupert, Port Edward, Kitkatla and Hartley Bay. There are two major secondary schools as well as alternate programs; the two village schools are accessible only by air or boat.

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School District No. 52 currently enrolls approximately 3,000 students. Barring a turn around in local industry, the province projects a steady 2% decrease in district enrollment over the next ten years. The District is facing the challenge of maintaining services and programs with reduced resources. Recent vacancies in middle and senior administration remain unfilled in an effort to minimize the effect on students.

School District No. 52 makes a deliberate effort to develop a collaborative culture and involve the greater community in its successes.

Summary of Process

In conducting the review of School District No. 52 (Prince Rupert), the External Review Team:

- Participated in an initial meeting focusing on the Partnership Agreement (District Accountability Contract)
- Reviewed school plans and the 10 Points of Inquiry at the following schools: Pineridge Elementary, Kanata Elementary, Conrad Elementary, Westview Elementary, Prince Rupert Secondary, Lax Kxeen Elementary, Seal Cove Elementary, Charles Hays Secondary School, Kitkatla (Lach Klan School), Hartley Bay School, Port Edward Elementary, Roosevelt Park Community School, Friendship House
- In addition the External Team met with:
    - First Nations Education Council
    - Prince Rupert Teachers' Union
    - Prince Rupert District Parents' Advisory Council
    - Prince Rupert Administrators' Association
    - International Union of Operating Engineers
- The External Team provided a summary of the report to the Partners in Education at the conclusion of the review

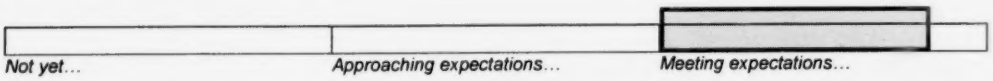
In addition to the Partnership Agreement (District Accountability Contract) and the schools' Growth Plan, the District Review Team considered the following:

- First Nations Partnership Agreement

The External Team acknowledges the open and welcoming hospitality of all partners in the Prince Rupert School District community.

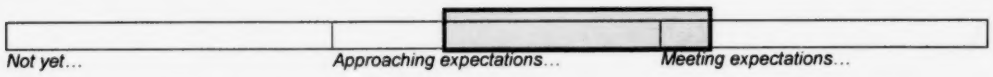
Observations in Key Areas - Focus on Student Achievement

1. *Goals:*
   Improving districts and schools have a strong instructional focus. This focus is made visible in relevant goals for improving achievement for all students.



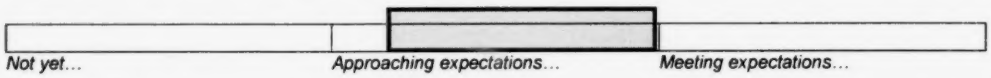
- All schools have identified a focus for improving achievement that is evident to the school community.
- School goals are relevant, based upon evidence and focused on student achievement.
- All schools have literacy goals and are beginning to adapt the goals to meet the needs of their students.
- There needs to be a more consistent relationship between school goals and available data for analysis.

2. *Rationale:*
   Improving districts and schools have a thorough and connected set of reasons, **based on evidence**, for the selection of their student achievement goals.



- The District has selected goals developed through a consensus with educational partners over time that are based upon compelling evidence.
- Schools have identified and are committed to supporting goals to improve achievement for Aboriginal students.
- Some schools are not yet able to articulate the rationale to support the specific achievement objectives for their students.
- Schools need to ensure that all available data is investigated when determining goal selection.

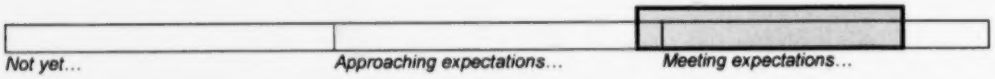
3. *Data:*
   Improving districts and schools are actively considering at least three sources of evidence including classroom, school, district and provincial data. The analysis of this evidence informs the selection of the District goals and is used to monitor progress.



- All schools collect data and provide the District with data.
- At the district level, data is being used to determine areas of need, establish plans for improvement and the means to monitor progress toward goals.

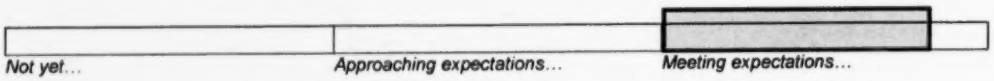
- The District has articulated, and has an understanding of, the data that supports the district goals identified through the Partnership Agreement.
- Most schools are at the beginning stage of considering, interpreting and utilizing various sources of data.
- Schools need to report data in a way that allows them to examine trends over time.
- The District needs to establish a system to manage data.

4. *Strategies:*
Improving districts and schools have well-organized, focused improvement plans in place. The strategies selected to achieve the goals are an intelligent blend of research, best practice, and innovative thinking.



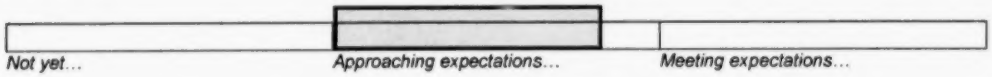
- School staffs appear to be open to change that support student achievement.
- The District shows an openness to seek and implement innovative and effective strategies.
- The District has shown leadership in adapting existing programs and in initiating break through practices to support the literacy goal.
- Staff development is linked to strategies designed to address school and district goals.
- Some schools have yet to effectively articulate the link between school goals, chosen strategies and desired results.

5. *Structures:*
Improving districts and schools have aligned structures – resources, time, and organizations – to get the results they want. This includes, but is not limited to, effectively differentiating resources in the areas of highest need for improvement.



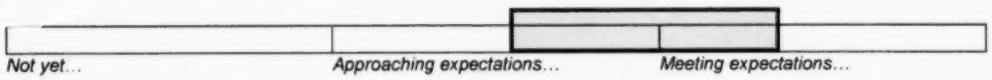
- Schools are adapting structures to support student achievement.
- The District provides support to enable structural changes in schools that support student achievement.
- The District has directed resources to design ELD programs that are clearly focused on meeting the needs of Aboriginal learners.
- The District plays a significant leadership role in the Northwest region.
- The District utilizes research partnerships to support goals (First Nations Department partnership with SFU, post graduate work of employees).
- Many schools demonstrate innovation and flexibility by assigning human resources to implement strategies to support their goals.
- There is clear evidence that the District and schools are using research based promising practices to inform classroom strategies in literacy (Reading 44, PALS, Talking Tables, PWIM).

6. *Results:*
Improving districts and schools get improved results – at the classroom, school and district levels.



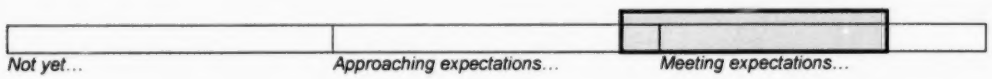
- All schools are collecting data in an effort to improve student achievement.
- Schools are at the beginning stages of monitoring their data to improve student achievement.
- To monitor results effectively the District needs to build capacity in assessment literacy (district staff, teachers, principals, SPCs).
- To effectively monitor results and make adjustments, the District needs to support schools in data management.

7. *Communication:*
Improving districts and schools are involved in continuous dialogue about student achievement and make public their improvement goals and the progress being made in specific areas of focus.



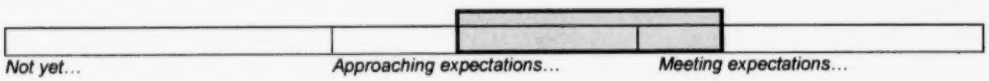
- There is evidence that the District has developed structures for consistent communication among the partner groups.
- The District has been innovative in developing various ways to communicate to the entire community district goals that support student achievement.
- The District needs to articulate and communicate its yearly plan for School Planning Council submission of School Improvement Plans, that includes
  (a) timelines for submission, (b) the District feedback process, and (c) the process for Board approval.

8. *Teamwork – District and School Coherence:*
Improving districts and schools have an interactive strategy for connecting school and district goals. School uniqueness and school district directions are both valued.



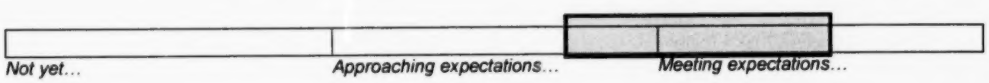
- District plans and school plans are closely aligned.
- It is unclear how district plans are influenced by school plans.
- Most schools have established School Planning Councils to better support the school and district planning process.
- Many schools are at the beginning stage of developing goals that reflect their unique needs and support school-specific objectives.

9. *Teamwork – District and Parent Involvement*:
Improving districts and schools work as a team with parents, including specific groups of parents, to improve student achievement.



- School Planning Councils and parent groups are actively working with schools to focus attention on improving student achievement.
- The First Nations Education Council, through the Partnership Agreement (2001), is a key partner in the development of the District Partnership Agreement (Accountability Contract).
- The District and schools have been innovative in providing opportunities to engage parents in actively supporting student achievement (PALS, Family Workshops, Home Reading Programs, Summer Read and Play).
- DPAC is actively involved in initiatives to support and enhance school and district goals.
- Most schools are at the earliest stages of effectively involving Aboriginal parents in formal or informal structures to support student achievement.
- The District and schools need to continue to seek ways to involve parents who reflect the diversity within the community.

10. *Leadership / Teamwork*:
Leaders in improving districts and schools have a clear vision for, and commitment to, improving achievement for all students. Leadership at all levels, in all roles, is encouraged and systematically developed in a collaborative learning community with a focus on improving student achievement.



- The First Nations Education Council continues to provide effective and innovative leadership; they demonstrate a unique commitment to a collaborative partnership to enhance the achievement of all learners.
- There is strong proactive leadership at the senior district level to create a collaborative learning community.
- There is evidence of leadership at all levels that focuses on improving student achievement.
- The District has a Partners in Education (PIE) committee that meets on a regular basis.
- The District holds School Achievement Meetings (SAMs) to support school and district initiatives to improve student achievement.
- The District needs to further explore ways to ensure collaboration with all education partners.

Strengths

Team observations of particular strengths related to student achievement:

1. The Sm'algyax language program is taught in all schools and it is a district program.
2. The District and schools have made research based decisions and focused on systemic changes that includes the use of Aboriginal human and curricular resources.
3. The District goal on social responsibility is assisting schools to foster a sense of belonging for all students.
4. There is a strong district resource team that focuses and assists staff with professional development, the development of resources, and the implementation of school goals.
5. Trustees, DPAC, PACs and the community provide a high level of support to the District and schools in developing resources and implementing change.
6. The First Nations Education Council, the District, and the education partners are to be commended for developing a Partnership Agreement (2001) that focuses on improving the success of Aboriginal students.

Promising Practices

District or school practices that could be helpful to other districts with a similar focus:

1. Talking Tables is a highly effective early success program developed locally to support oral language development. Implemented district wide, Talking Tables targets phonemic and phonological awareness while emphasizing vocabulary development.
2. PALS (Parents as Literacy Supporters) is a highly successful program adapted from the Langley School District to address literacy improvement through involvement of parents. PALS has been effectively utilized to build trust and bring Aboriginal families into the school to support Kindergarten children and literacy at home. The program is being further extended into the primary years.
3. Summer Read and Play is a widely supported summer reading literacy and play program. It provides literacy based fun that reinforces reading development that might otherwise be lost over the summer.
4. Full alignment of K-7 Benchmarks with Provincial Reading Performance Standards and classroom report card marks allows for smooth student transition and articulation between schools.
5. The First Nations Education Council's Sm'algyax Calendar is a cultural and language resource that provides students with an identity, presence and sense of belonging, and builds awareness and sensitivity within the entire community.

Recommendations

Team recommendations for strengthening school and district focus on student achievement and for improving results:

Goals:

All schools need to develop clear, measurable, evidence-based objectives that are linked to, not dependent upon, district goals.

Data:

All schools need to collect, analyse and interpret data in order to effectively develop appropriate performance targets, monitor progress and make adjustments.

Schools need to address data tracking issues of special needs students.

Staff Development:

All schools need to further develop the skills and expertise to analyse data and its application to the goal-setting process including: the use of trends over time, dis-aggregation for specific information, application of assessment data collected and triangulation.

Deeper Understanding:

As the data-driven dialogue becomes embedded within the practice of all schools and all district partners, the District and schools need to take the steps necessary to more fully understand the cultural differences that affect learning and ask the appropriate questions to provide deeper knowledge to inform practice.

Collaborative Relationships:

The External Review Team recognizes the work and risks that have been taken to establish a new collaborative culture in School District No. 52. The District and schools need to continue to develop collaborative relationships related to student achievement and to ensure that all partner groups are full, active participants in the process.

The District needs to ensure that:

- secondary schools are reflected in all work regarding the District goals, and
- participation rates for FSA testing and provincial examinations need to include more Aboriginal students.